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BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

THE HARMONY OF THE SPHERES¹

The Pythagoreans believed that there was a harmony of the spheres, produced by the slower heavenly bodies giving out a deep note, and the swifter a high note. We do not hear these sounds, just as a miller does not hear the sound of his mill, unless it stops and begins again, and the music of the celestial orbs is unceasing. This inaudible harmony of the spheres (EB¹¹ 22, 700^a; 25, 648^a)² is alluded to in a later addition to the first seven verses of Ps. 19, which have no connection with the last eight verses. Ps. 19:2-7 consists of two triplets with 3 + 3 beats, whereas vv. 8-15 contains two hexastichs with 3 + 2 beats. We find the same (elegiac) meter in Ps. 119, which is not based on Ps. 19:8-15, as Bæthgen thinks: these two hexastichs represent a condensation of the 22 alphabetic octastichs in Ps. 119, just as the Decalogue is the quintessence of the old moral and religious precepts, which was probably extracted by the prophets in the seventh century (BB 367). Both Pss. 19 and 119 are Maccabean, although Hitzig regarded Ps. 19 as Davidic [see also MVAG 22, 63. 69].

Ps. 19:4, *There is no speech or words, their voice is inaudible*, seems to be an illustrative quotation (BL 26) from another hymn describing the harmony of the spheres. Grotius' explanation, *Non est illis sermo neque verba; at sine (his scilicet) intelligitur vox eorum* is incorrect; *bēlî nišmá'* means *unheard* or *inaudible*, just as *bēlî hāfûkâ* in Hos. 7:8 signifies *untuned* (JBL 34, 68). We need not suppose that the poet of the two original triplets had in mind the harmony of the spheres; he only meant to say, Heaven and earth tell their own story: if a man sees the wonderful works of God by day, he realizes the omnipotence of the

¹ This paper and the two following notes as well as the article on Maccabean Elegies (above, pp. 157-170) have been in type since August, 1918.

² For the abbreviations see above, p. 142.

Creator; and if he gazes up into the starry heavens by night, he is just as much impressed with God's power and glory.

We must not substitute *qôlâm* for *qayyûâm* in v. 5; *qôlâm* would never have been corrupted to *qayyûâm*. The noun *qay* means *cord*, string, tone, note, musical sound. Also *τόρος* (from *τείνειν*, to stretch; cf. Lat. *tendere*) signifies *cord*, string, tension, strength, force, accent, tone, sound (cf. Ewald, *Psalmen*, 1866, p. 34). Heb. *qay* in the present passage may be an adaptation of *τόρος*, just as *tôrîm* in Cant. 1:10 represents *ροπίσματα* (BL 44, n. *; 85, n. 18) or *ma'sê* in Ps. 45:2 *ποίημα*. Ps. 19 is certainly not older than Ps. 45 which was written in 150 B. C. (ZA 30, 94). Assy. *qû'u*, to wait, corresponds to French *attendre*. Also Lat. *tonus* denotes *tension* and *tone*, especially *thunder* (cf. *qôlôṭ*, thunder-peals, Ex. 19:16; BB 361). Our *tune* is a doublet of *tone*. We use *tone* also for an ancient psalm-tune or chant (EB¹¹ 21, 706). For Arab. *qâyyûâ*, to strengthen, we may compare our *to tone up*. Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (1911) p. 299 thinks that *qayyûâm* means originally *their puke* or *vomit*; he combines it with *qî* in Is. 28:8, although he has rightly called attention to the idea of the harmony of the spheres (*op. cit.* 25). Reuss (1893) regarded *ha-raqi'* at the end of l. 1 as an appositional addition to *ma'sê iadâû*, and referred *bahém* at the end of l. 4 to *bi-qçé* (JAOS 37, 322) *teḥél*, rendering: *ihre Töne bis an's Ende der Welt, wo er der Sonne ihr Zelt gesetzt*. Schultz (1888) translated: *bis zum Ende des Erdkreises* (cf. Ps. 72:8) *halten sie ihr Gespräch*. Nor can we accept Budde's rendering (1900) *their measuring-line* (i. e. the arch of heaven) or Krätzschar's reading (1901) *qabbâm*, *their arch* (see Cheyne, *Psalms*, 1904). In *Die schönsten Psalmen* (1915) Budde renders: *ihr Gebot* [see also MVAG 22, 70, below].

For the perfect *iaçâ* in v. 5 and the participle *iôçê* in v. 6 we had better substitute the imperfect *ieçê*.

Before v. 5^b, for the sun *He has set a tent in them*, the first hemistich of the second triplet has dropped out; it may be restored on the basis of Prov. 8:28, *when He established the clouds above*; [contrast MVAG 22, 46].

The first six lines of Ps. 19 may be rendered as follows:

- 2 The heavens tell out God's glory,
the skies recount His handiwork.

- 3 Day tells the story by day,
 night makes it known by night.
 5 *Their tone goes through the whole earth,
 their sound to the end of the world.

He established the welkin above,

 for the sun He set there a lodge;

- 6 And he comes forth^β from his bower,
 gladly running his course like a hero;
 7 From the end of the heavens he starts,^γ
 and naught is hid from his glow.

(α) 4 There is no speech or words, their voice is inaudible.

(β) 6 like a bridegroom (γ) and his circuit goes back to their ends

Grotius remarked *ad v. 5^b: Soli posuit tabernaculum in eis, supple coelis*. Cheyne and Bæthgen thought that each hemistich had four beats, also Gunkel and Budde seem to assume this meter; but *kēbôd* and *ma'sé* (JAOS 37, 322) in l. 1, *ʾabbî* and *ʾēḥayyê* in l. 2, *bē-kol* in l. 3, *sām* in l. 4, and *la-rûc*, in l. 5 are unaccented (AJSL 23, 240). Briggs (*Psalms*, 1908) correctly states that the first half of Ps. 19 has the trimeter measure, but he thinks that this poem was composed in the Babylonian period, and that originally it was a hymn to the Sungod, which was subsequently adapted to the worship of JHVH. Gunkel compares the cuneiform hymns to the Sungod (iv R 20, No. 2) and to Istar (AL³ 135). For the *lodge* or *tent* of the Sungod he refers to Gressmann's *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, vol. ii, Nos. 92.101.102; cf. also A. Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur* (1913) p. 250; *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients* (1906) p. 559.

The Hebrew text of the two triplets should be read as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| ומעשה-ידיו מגיד הרקיע: | 2 השמים מספרים כבוד-אל |
| ולילה ללילה יחודה-דעת: | 3 יום ליום יביע-אמר |
| ובקצה תבל מליהם: | 5 בכל-הארץ יצא קום |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| לְשִׁמְשׁ שֶׁם-אֶהֱל בָּהֶם ו | אֶמֶן שְׁחָקִים מִמֶּעַל |
| יִשִּׁישׁ כְּגִבּוֹר לְרוּץ-אָרֶחַ: | וְהוּא יֵצֵא מִחֶפְתּוֹ 6 |
| וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִחֶפְתּוֹ: | מִקֵּצָה הַשָּׁמַיִם מוֹצֵאוֹ 7 |

(α) 4 אֵין-אָמַר וְאֵין דְּבָרִים כְּלִי נִשְׁמַע קוֹלָם: (γ) וְתִקְוַתּוֹ אֶל קִצּוֹתָם
(β) 6 כַּחַתָּן

This would be in Assyrian (cf. JBL 37, 217):

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 <i>šamē tanitti-ilī ušannū-ma</i> | <i>šupukšun šipir-qātēšu ināmbī</i> |
| 3 <i>ṭru-ana-ūri amātam izākar-ma</i> | <i>mūšu-ana-mūši ṭēma uttār</i> |
| 5 <i>Zamāršun ina-kal-erṣitim uṣṣā-ma</i> | <i>amātišun ana-kippāt māti.</i> |
| <i>Urpāti eliš urattī-ma</i> | <i>ina-libbišin ana-šamši maṣalla-iškun</i> |
| 6 <i>U-šūβ ina-maštakisū uṣṣā-ma</i> | <i>ana-garār-urzi kīma-qurādi izādī</i> |
| <i>Ištu-kippāt šamē nipixšur</i> | <i>u-lapān-šarūrišu mīma ul-ikkatam.</i> |

(α) 4 *Dibbē u-amāti lāšū-ma* *qūlšunu ul iššemī*
(β) 6 *kīma ʾēriši* (γ) *u-sitxuršu ana kippātišun*

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MINE EARS HAST THOU OPENED

In his translation of Ps. 40, in the Polychrome Bible, Wellhausen adopted Olshausen's suggestion to transfer the clause *Mine ears hast Thou opened* from v. 7 to v. 8, but *oznāim karitā-lī¹* should be appended, not prefixed, to the hemistich *bi-mḡillat séfr katūb-ʿalāi*, and *katūb-ʿalāi* does not mean *prescribed for me*, but *graven on me*, i. e. *engraved on my mind*, stamped upon my mind, imprinted on my soul; *katūb-ʿalāi* is equivalent to *katūb-ʿal-lūh libbī*, written on the tablet of my heart, Prov. 3:3; cf. Jer. 17:1; 31:33; 2 Cor. 3:3; see also DB 3, 871^b.873^a, and FV 273.

Nor can we render: *in the volume of the book it is written of me* (AV) or *in the roll of the book is my duty written* (Cheyne,

¹ For the enclitic *-lī* cf. the remarks on *hā-jōbē rēm* (JBL 36, 251) and *bīšūʾatēkā-mā* (JBL 37, 214). The initial σ in σῶμα δὲ κατηγορίσω μοι (cf. Heb. 10:5) is due to dittography (cf. *Kings*, SBOT, 172, 53): thus ὦτα (not the diminutive ὠρία, Grotius, Reuss; or στόμα, Olshausen) became σῶτα which was corrected to σῶμα. See also Reinke, *Habakuk* (1870) p. 2.